



News Release

For Immediate Release
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UCAN Gives New Sun Safety Tips For Summer *Sunscreen Essential but Can Create False Sense of Security*

Salt Lake City, UT – New research shows that sunscreens do not protect skin for long periods of time against certain Ultra Violet (UV) rays from the sun. Sunscreens need to be re-applied every one to two hours for maximum protection says the Utah Cancer Action Network (UCAN).

Research published in the October 2003 Journal of Investigative Dermatology shows that sunscreens are very effective against UVB rays, the rays that cause sunburn, but much less protective against harmful UVA rays, the rays that cause DNA damage to the cells deep within the skin. It is this layer of cells that regenerates skin. Experts fear that damage to the DNA of these cells may increase a person's risk of developing skin cancer.

"Scientists are concerned that sunscreens are giving people a false sense of security, so that they can stay out in the sun longer," says Jan Heins, Cancer Control Program, Utah Department of Health (UDOH). "Experts are not advocating giving up on sunscreen, but are encouraging people to reapply sunscreen every one to two hours to get the maximum benefit of UVA and UVB sun protection." One bad sunburn (with blisters) before the age of 18 increases risk of melanoma later in life.

Heins recommends that other sun safety measures should be used as well as sunscreen.

"The best option is to avoid peak hours of exposure, to cover up with clothing, and if you are out in the sun reapply sunscreen often and generously."

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UCAN suggests the following tips to parents to protect themselves and their children:

- Protect your skin all year round, not just in the summer or at the beach.
- Stay out of the sun when UV rays are most intense (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.).
- Use a high factor sunscreen (a minimum of SPF 15 or higher) on any part of the body that is not covered up, and re-apply it at least every two hours, even on cloudy days.
- Be sure to re-apply sunscreens especially if you have been in the water.
- Protect your lips with sunscreen lip balm.
- Wear wide-brimmed hats, long sleeves, loose-fitting clothes, longer shorts and wrap-around sunglasses with UV protection.
- Do not use tanning booths.

For more information go to www.ucan.cc or call the information line at 1-888-222-2542.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.